



# News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.  
Governor

Michael S. Steele  
Lt. Governor

Mary Ann Saar  
Secretary

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Vernarelli (410) 339-5065

## **FLOWERS, TREES, AND GREENERY BRIGHTEN THE OLD STATE PEN: METROPOLITAN TRANSITION CENTER TO DEDICATE MEDITATION GARDEN ON MAY 11**

***Only the second such prison garden in the U.S.***

TOWSON, MD (May 5, 2006)---The Metropolitan Transition Center in Baltimore, the former State Pen and the oldest prison in the Western Hemisphere still operating, will mark a milestone on May 11, dedicating a grant-funded meditation garden and horticulture project.

Maryland now has the first two such prison gardens in the U.S. Western Correctional Institution in Cumberland dedicated its garden last summer.

The TKF Foundation and Parks and People funded the extensive garden project. TKF, based in Annapolis, also was the primary funder for the WCI garden. Total grants for the Metropolitan Transition Center garden and horticulture project amounted to more than \$37,000.

MTC's garden has transformed a bleak, concrete yard into a lush, flower- and tree-filled area featuring benches, a walking path, and a writing journal. The garden will give inmates and staff at the ancient prison--- parts of which are more than 200 years old--- a chance to get away for a few moments of quiet reflection.

Inmates did almost all of the labor, including the stone and concrete work, and planted all of the trees, flowers, and vegetables.

"This project has meant work for the inmates, and we hope to add a full horticulture program down the road to keep that work coming," says MTC Warden Gary Hornbaker. Added Assistant Warden Carolyn Atkins, who oversaw much of the work: "We're all about changing peoples' attitudes and giving them valuable skills, and this fits right in with those goals."

Most of the approximately 1,500 inmates at MTC have less than two years remaining on their sentences.

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